We have been down this road before and we should know by now where it leads—to blind and unquestioning support of a Saigon government lured into a false sense of security by our aid, with no real capability to defend itself, by itself, and with no incentive to yield up anything for the sake of a compromise settlement. From this, one can safely project an open-ended conflict between the two Vietnams. True, it is largely their war now, which is a lot better than it being largely our war, as it was for seven agonizing years. But we are nonetheless subsidizing a substantial part of it. Thus, it seems only reasonable for the two sets of armed services and foreign relations committees in both houses of Congress to conduct a searching inquiry into the administration's current Vietnam policy. For this country has a moral as well as a political commitment to the objective of a cease-fire and an ultimate Vietnamese settlement which the administration so proudly proclaimed to be very nearly accomplished facts a year ago. And the American public has a right to know whether, and how, this objective is being served by our continuing aid to South Vietnam.

We would not argue that the answer turns entirely on what this country does or doesn't do for President Thieu. Part of the answer obviously must come from Hanoi. Part of it also depends on the efficacy and validity of that larger "structure for peace," reaching from Moscow and Peking to Washington, of which the President had made so much. But a big part of the answer, nonetheless, depends upon Saigon. So we think that before Congress approves more billions for President Thieu, it ought to try to find out whether the easy availability of this subsidy may not be prolonging an intensified Vietnam war by consolidating a militant, recalcitrant and repressive regime in Saigon. For there is at least some reason to believe that a more selective and judicious application—or denial—of this money could make it work to far better effect as an integral part of a wider diplomatic effort to bring about something more nearly resembling a Vietnam peace.

From a Washington Post editorial, February 4, 1974

coalition to stop funding the war

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There is no peace in Indochina today. Why?

One year after the signing of the "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam," the suffering of the peoples of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, continues at unconscionable levels. Senator Kennedy's Subcommittee on Refugees, completing its one year study of the effects of the "cease-fire," reports that more than 50,000 Vietnamese were killed -- more than the total of American war deaths in 8 years -- and over 800,000 people became refugees in South Vietnam alone during 1973. The Peace Agreement was designed to stop these horrors. It creates the framework to transfer the conflict from the battlefield to the political arena. The three forces within South Vietnam -- the Provisional Revolutionary Government, the Saigon administration, and the neutralist elements -- were to be given the opportunity to share political power within the proposed National Council of Reconciliation and Concord.

Yet there has been no concrete movement toward a political solution in South Vietnam, and the killing continues. The lawyers, teachers, Buddhists, Catholics, students, and others who comprise the neutralist forces remain in President Thieu's prisons by the tens of thousands. In January, Thieu announced that no national elections will be held in South Vietnam, as called for in the Agreement, and that he was ordering offensive military operations to be undertaken by his army against those zones controlled by the other side.

Why is this happening? Why is it that the Saigon government can so blatantly disregard every provision of the Paris Agreement intended to restore peace to Vietnam and to create a viable political process? Senator Cranston (Calif.) succinctly answered these questions in the Senate on February 19th:

We are subsidizing systematic killing, torture, and imprisonment with money that rightfully belongs to our cities, our poor, and our elderly. . . . there seems to be no end to our involvement in the grindingly brutal system of oppression perpetuated by President Thieu.

Senator Cranston knows that the reason "there seems to be no end to our involvement" is because President Thieu feels there is no end to American dollars in support of his dictatorship! Official government figures now show that at least 86% of the Saigon regime's budget is paid for by the U.S. (which makes Saigon more dependent on the federal government than any one of the 50 states). Can this be called "noninvolvement?"

It is clear that a regime so dependent on outside sources for its existence has little incentive to respond to the suffering of its own people and their desire for peace and freedom. Such an "incentive" must come from the source of his funding: the American taxpayer. It must make clear to President Thieu that he no longer has a blank check from the U.S. Congress to carry out his "brutal system of oppression," a system unparalleled anywhere else in the world.
The massive increases in the Nixon Administration's requests for aid to Indochina for the coming fiscal year (FY 1975, beginning July 1st) has startled many people in Washington. For South Vietnam, for instance, in the second year of "peace with honor," a 65% increase is being requested above the level approved by Congress for the current fiscal year. The vast majority of this aid is used to support Thieu's military and police state.

Additionally, the Department of Defense has asked Congress to immediately authorize $474 million in supplemental military aid for South Vietnam. The arrogance of this request has particularly outraged many Congresspeople because it corresponds almost exactly to the amount of money Congress cut during the regular appropriation process last Fall.

The Administration's new requests for FY 1975 aid to Indochina are as follows:

**Military Aid to South Vietnam**
- Approved for FY 1974: $1.1 billion
- Supplemental Requested for FY 1975: $474 million
- FY 1975 Requested: $1.6 billion

**Military Aid to Cambodia**
- Approved for FY 1974: $350 million
- Requested for FY 1975: $390 million

**Economic Aid to South Vietnam**
- Approved for FY 1974: $350 million
- Requested for FY 1975: $600 million

**Economic Aid to Cambodia and Laos**
- Approved for FY 1974: $100 million
- Requested for FY 1975: $189 million

All of these programs will be undergoing exceedingly critical scrutiny by Congress this year. A significant hostility toward the Thieu regime has subtly emerged in Washington as the first anniversary of the signing of the Paris Agreement passed with no progress toward peace. In the Senate, a number of important Senators will be meeting to map out a strategy to significantly cut and restrict aid to Saigon; in the House, a large group of Congressional aides are working toward the same goal. Such prominent figures as Clark Clifford, former Secretary of Defense, are prepared to testify in favor of cutting aid to Saigon. The one unknown element -- public pressure -- will be the key factor in determining if 1974 is the year that American involvement in South Vietnam is ended once and for all.